

HOSPITALS FOR BUREAU OF WAR RISK INSURANCE. .

JANUARY 27, 1921.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. ANDREWS of Nebraska, from the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 15894.]

The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds having had under consideration the bill (H. R. 15894) to authorize an appropriation to enable the Secretary of the Treasury to provide medical, surgical, and hospital services and supplies for persons who served in the World War and are patients of the Bureau of War Risk Insurance and of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, Division of Rehabilitation, and for other purposes, report the same back with certain amendments and also with the recommendation that the bill as amended do pass.

Amendments:

1. On page 2, line 16, after the word "construction," strike out the words "of which there shall be," and in line 17, after the word "neuro-psychiatric," insert the words "and tuberculosis."

2. On page 2, line 19, strike out the word "and," and beginning after the word "States," in line 20, strike out the remainder of the line, all of line 21, and all in line 22 up to the word "one."

3. In lieu of section 6 of the bill, amend by inserting a new section as follows:

SEC. 6. That the foregoing hospital and other facilities shall be available for veterans of the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection, and the Boxer Rebellion, suffering from neuro-psychiatric and tubercular ailments and diseases.

4. Amend section 6, page 4, of the bill by striking out the figure "6" after the word "section" in line 12 and inserting the figure "7" in its place, and also by striking out the figure "3" at the end of line 16 and inserting in its place the figure "4".

Paragraph 6 of section 302 of the Sweet bill (Public, No. 104, 66th Cong.), contains the following:

(6) In addition to the compensation above provided, the injured shall be furnished by the United States such reasonable governmental medical, surgical, and hospital services, and with such supplies, including wheeled chairs, artificial limbs, trusses,

and similar appliances as the director may determine to be useful and reasonably necessary, which wheeled chairs, artificial limbs, trusses, and similar appliances may be procured by the Bureau of War Risk Insurance in such manner, either by purchase or manufacture, as the director may determine to be advantageous and reasonably necessary.

The certifications thus made by the Director of the Bureau of War Risk Insurance impose upon the Government the duty of furnishing adequate hospital facilities.

The pending bill (H. R. 15894) is designed to meet urgent needs in the Central Atlantic coast States, the region of the Great Lakes, the Central Southwestern States, the North Pacific coast States, the Rocky Mountain States, and southern California.

It provides five new hospitals to furnish skillful care and treatment for neuropsychiatric and tubercular cases that may continue during the next 40 or 50 years.

Under date of December 5, 1919, the Hon. Carter Glass, Secretary of the Treasury, addressed a communication to the Speaker of the House of Representatives in relation to additional hospital facilities for discharged soldiers, sailors, and marines and Army and Navy nurses.

The Secretary's letter was printed as House Document No. 481, Sixty-sixth Congress, second session. In that communication the Secretary informed Congress that it would be necessary to make provision for 23,400 beds within the next two years and that the total cost would be \$85,445,000.

There was also submitted with the Secretary's letter a tentative draft of a bill intended to give him full authority to enter at once upon a building program and expend that amount of money at the discretion of the department as to the locations, character, and type of buildings. That document also states that the maximum number discharged upon certificates of disability was 641,000, and upon that basis proposed an elaborate scheme of building operations.

Your committee has endeavored thus far to ascertain the actual needs of localities or districts so that it could submit to the House definite information and estimates in each case.

Out of the 641,000 cases of disability discharged from the service 155,000 applicants have been examined and found entitled to treatment. One hundred and twelve thousand of that 155,000, having been analyzed carefully, show 15,000 seriously afflicted with mental troubles, 15,000 and more with tubercular troubles, and 81,000 cases of general disability. This is our problem.

The certifications are increasing at the rate of 1,000 per month. We have assumed this liability. Under the law we are obliged to meet it. We stop not to plead the law, but we stand in recognition of the fact that our first and imperative duty is to provide for the disabled soldiers, sailors, and marines to the best possible advantage. Twenty-two thousand patients are now under the charge of the Public Health Service alone. The State and private hospitals in various communities are also used to the limit. Some provision is being made for all thus far, however imperfect it may be now and then. But here are chronic cases, here are the general disabilities in the numbers indicated. We must make adequate provision.

The sundry civil bill for 1921 aided your committee very materially in the solution of its problems. Forty-six million dollars were carried

by that act to be distributed at the discretion of the Director of the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, and thus the National Homes for Disabled Soldiers came more readily into service than any other institutions we could find. The sundry civil bill for 1922 carries \$33,000,000 for the same purpose.

It will be comparatively inexpensive to add new units to such institutions as we now have, and thus increase the hospital facilities at the minimum of cost, the heating, lighting, water, and sewer plants and the general overhead charges already being provided for.

Section 4 of this bill provides for the transfer of Fort Mackenzie, Wyo., and Fort Walla Walla, Wash., from the War Department to the Treasury Department for the uses contemplated by this bill.

Fort Mackenzie, Wyo., is situated 3 miles from Sheridan, Wyo., a flourishing town of 15,000 people, on the main north and south line of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway. The post was established in 1898 on a tract of 6,480 acres. It is a two-battalion post, mostly constructed in 1907 to 1910. All of the buildings are of brick, first-class fire-proof construction, including administration building, six barrack buildings, post exchange, gymnasium, hospital, complete sets of quarters for field and line officers, stables, quartermaster and ordnance storehouses, veterinary hospital, etc. All the buildings are in first-class condition for immediate use. The approximate cost of the buildings was \$1,200,000.

Fort Walla Walla, Wash., is situated 1 mile from Walla Walla. It was established in 1859, on a reservation of 611.73 acres. This is a one-battalion post, first-class construction, largely frame, with administration building, barracks, hospital, complete quarters for field and line officers, stables, storehouses, etc. The approximate cost of the buildings was \$400,000.

As a means of expediting the work of construction, section 5 authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to utilize the services of architects and builders outside of ordinary governmental agencies if he should deem it wise to do so. In the course of the hearings it was shown that the veterans of the Spanish American War, who are suffering from mental and tubercular diseases do not have suitable hospital facilities. Accordingly, section 6 authorizes their admission to the hospitals provided for in this bill.

The bill carries an authorization of \$13,000,000 in section 7, \$12,500,000 for the construction of five new hospitals, and the sum of \$500,000 for the repair and equipment of the two forts mentioned in section 4.

In view of existing necessities, your committee urges the prompt passage of the bill.



